

REMARKS

The previous rejection of claims 1-7 and 12-15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Moore et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,369,775), and the rejection of claims 8-11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Moore et al. has been maintained and made final. Applicants traverse. The Examiner's response to the previous remarks will be addressed.

The Examiner likens the pitch sections of Moore to the abutting first and second axial pieces claimed. The explicit claim language and ordinary meaning of the terms used in the claim preclude such an interpretation.

Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary defines "abut" as 1) to touch along a border or with a projecting part (land abuts on the road) and 2a) to terminate at a point of contact. Applicants submit that the term "abut" within the context of claim 1 inherently describes the first and second axial pieces as terminating at a point of contact or touching along a border, neither of which are implicitly or explicitly provided by Moore et al.

The "sections" of Moore et al. are not synonymous or analogous to the claimed "axial pieces," and the sections therefore fail to "abut one another" because there are no discrete pieces that have a point of termination of borders. Instead, the core plug 14 of Moore et al. is continuous and unitary, and the sections accordingly are non-discrete, having no defined borders therebetween.